

REFERENCES

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Repetto's Response to Acquavella

Contrary to John Acquavella's assertion, my coauthor and I have responded directly to the substance of points made by the pesticide industry scientists in print and in person. We agree that *ad hominem* attacks restrict scientific discourse. Therefore, we

think it regrettable that when our report was first published, the chief spokesman for the American Crop Protection Association, which organized this scientific critique, publicly impugned our motives and qualifications for undertaking the study. We also regret that senior officials of some of the pesticide manufacturing companies saw fit to address letters of complaint to members of the WRI's board of directors about the study, seeking to influence our organizational policies and financing.

The report in question, *Pesticides and the Immune System: The Public Health Risks*, has been reviewed repeatedly by scientists and scientific organizations not linked to the pesticide industry, including the U.S. EPA, the World Health Organization, and the Netherlands Institute for Public Health and Environment. Their judgments differed dramatically from those expressed in the industry's critique. Most recently, while this exchange has been under way, our report received an award in the British Medical Association's 1997 Medical Book Competition after a peer-reviewed selection process. The report received High Commendation (2nd prize) in the public health category. The citation from the judges read as follows:

An excellent review of the literature on the immunotoxic effects of pesticides with informed speculative comment on the potential effects of biocidal agents in combination.

Essential reading for policymakers, it is well presented and should be of interest to many health professionals.

Why, we wonder, does the judgment of the medical profession of Great Britain differ so markedly from that of Acquavella and his colleagues? Our hope is that this exchange will stimulate readers of *Environmental Health Perspectives* to read the report for themselves and form their own conclusions. Copies of the report can be obtained through the WRI website (<http://www.wri.org>).

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Corrections and Clarifications

In the article by Calabrese et al. (Soil Ingestion: A Concern for Acute Toxicity in Children) published in *EHP* in Volume 105, Number 12, 1997, there was an error in the values for arsenic ingested from soil. Printed values were 2, 8, and 15 µg/kg; the correct ingested arsenic doses are 0.2, 0.8, and 0.15 µg/kg. This error appears on p. 1355 and in Table 1 on p. 1356.

Big Ideas for your Health and Future



- An "environmental genome" study of how disease-susceptibility genes vary from person to person in a representative sector of the population. To help us see why you might get a nerve disorder from an exposure to a chemical whereas your friend Lee might not . . . Information to protect you and Lee, without guesstimates and fudge factors.
- A survey of chemicals polluting our blood — a look at what we, as a population, have been exposed to.
- Customized mice to quickly screen chemicals and drugs . . . and help conquer diseases like breast cancer.
- A study of mixtures. We don't face chemicals one on one. Why should science?

These ideas are Now at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, one of the National Institutes of Health, and at the National Toxicology Program, which is headquartered at NIEHS.

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